

TEWKSBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOOD ALLERGIES

(Revised February 7, 2007)

Preface

The incidence of potentially life-threatening food allergies among children is increasing across the nation. The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN) reports that over a five-year period an estimated number of Americans with food allergies has increased from 6 million to approximately 11 million. Peanuts and tree nuts are the leading cause of severe reactions. Approximately 400 students across our district have been confirmed with food allergies.

The Tewksbury Public Schools recognizes the need to help children with allergies avoid foods to which the child is allergic and to establish emergency procedures to treat allergic reactions that may occur.

Statement of Protocol

The purpose of this protocol is to establish a safe school environment for students with food allergies and to support parents/guardians regarding food allergy management. To implement this protocol, the Superintendent of Schools, in consultation with the School Physician, shall develop procedures establishing the food allergy protocols of the Tewksbury Public Schools. These procedures have been reviewed and approved by the Tewksbury School Committee.

Administrative Guidelines

Neither the Tewksbury Public Schools, nor its school personnel, shall be responsible for diagnosing and determining food allergies and/or those foods or ingredients in foods that are safe for a student with an identified food allergy to consume. The Tewksbury Public Schools will meet, upon request, with parents of a student with a food allergy to receive information from the parent about allergies known to them.

Parents will be provided, upon request, with information from the food services department regarding school lunch ingredients. Requests for such information must be made to the Director of Food Service in writing to 139 Pleasant Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876. Please allow at least seven (7) days for processing.

Tewksbury Public Schools
Life-Threatening (Revised February 7, 2007)

Purpose

To minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens that pose a threat to Tewksbury students and to educate the Tewksbury school community about life-threatening food allergies.

1. Develop and implement an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) for all students with diagnosed life-threatening allergies, based on medical documentation from their physician.
2. Implement annual life-threatening allergy and epi-pen training for all staff or more frequently as need for new staff or others.
3. Minimize the use of food during the school day.

Family Responsibility

1. Notify the school nurse and principal of your child's allergies.
2. Provide medical documentation from your health care provider to the school nurse.
3. Provide a list of foods and/or ingredients that would cause a life-threatening reaction to the school nurse.
4. Provide the school with signed Medication Order Form from the physician, signed parent permission for medication administration, and a signed medication plan.
5. Deliver/provide approved medications in proper containers to school prior to or on the first day of school.
6. Meet with the school nurse to develop an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP). The school district is not responsible for researching, developing, implementing, updating, or otherwise drafting a written plan for a student whose parent(s) do not submit, on an annual basis, a completed Accident/Illness Form, along with written documentation identifying a food allergy or allergies.
7. Schedule a meeting with the classroom teacher and/or school nurse to review the IHCP (Individual Health Care Plan). Confirm the meeting with the Principal.
8. Educate your child in the self-management of their allergy as age appropriate including: safe and unsafe foods, strategies for avoiding the allergen, symptoms of an allergic reaction, how and when to tell an adult a reaction is starting, how to read food labels, and self-administration of an epi-pen.
9. Purchase a medical alert bracelet/necklace and encourage your child to wear it at all times.
10. Provide the school with safe snacks to be used as stipulated in the IHCP.
11. Advise the school of any field trip destinations that may pose potential issues (exhibits, activities) for your child.

12. Accompany your child on field trips, whenever possible.

School Responsibility

1. Ensure that an IHCP for each child with a life-threatening allergy (LTA) is created and implemented.
2. Establish a cleaning protocol for classrooms, cafeteria, and other areas of the building, as identified in the IHCP and in accordance with universal health precautions.
3. Emphasize the procedure of how and when to communicate with the main office and school nurse in the event of any emergency. This plan should include all school staff, coverage plans for the teacher and the nurse, and specific equipment to facilitate communication.
4. Remind children of the no sharing / no trading food program.
I understand and have explained to my son/daughter that because of the chance of fellow students having food allergies and negative reactions to the same, no food is to be exchanged with, given to, or accepted from another student or any person on the bus or at school.
5. Teach students and staff proper hand washing techniques before and after eating, as age appropriate.
6. Prohibit the use of food for classroom functions, except as outlined in this policy.
7. Prohibit the sale of all bake goods, independent of the Tewksbury Public School Food Service Department, and/or candy during the regularly scheduled school hours.
8. Classroom teachers will advise parents of any school activity that requires the use of food in advance of the project or activity as stipulated in the IHCP.
9. Limit the use of food for curriculum instruction, (i.e., science labs). If food is used (i.e., squid for a science lab), notify parents in advance as stipulated in the IHCP.
10. Prohibit using food as an incentive and/or a reward.
11. Prohibit the eating of food products on routine school bus routes except for those medically documented needs, i.e., diabetics.
12. At the elementary level, provide guidelines for monitoring *snack and lunch*. In classes where children have a life-threatening allergy, the principal ***shall***:
 - i. send a letter / notice advising parents that no peanut/tree nuts and/or other known allergens be allowed in a classroom due to the life threatening nature of such allergies;
 - ii. send a letter / notice strongly recommending against bringing peanut/tree nut and/or other known allergens or by-products into schools due to the life threatening nature of such allergies;
 - iii. establish within classroom/cafeterias eating areas designated for the consumption of specific foods;
 - iv. have flexibility in grouping students during the lunch period to limit exposure to potential allergens; and

- v. ensure that the child has access to all classroom activities and celebrations, accommodated accordingly, i.e., no restaurant food, commercially prepared cakes, cookies, or other confections, all home prepared foods not to contain peanut oil and/or other known allergens.
13. Provide an educational program to all staff and to make available to parents on Life-Threatening Allergies (LTA), as needed or when appropriate.
 14. Conduct training sessions for all school staff as soon as possible each school year. Training will include a review of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and the proper use of the epi-pen and will emphasize the importance of prevention and risk reduction. At the conclusion of the training, staff will complete the Epinephrine Competency Skill Check List.
 15. Emphasize the importance of early recognition of an allergic reaction and timely use of Epinephrine.
 16. Establish an emergency plan for field trips that includes how to activate EMS and who carries and administers epi-pens.

School Nurse Responsibility

1. Develop an IHCP, corresponding Emergency Allergy Action Plan (EAAP) and Medication Administration Plan with the parents/guardian and a multidisciplinary school team (when appropriate) prior to school entry or at the first opportunity following a new life-threatening food allergy diagnosis. IHCP will be reviewed annually and sent home in the spring of the following school year.
2. Maintain open and frequent communication between home and school.
3. Communicate these plans to school staff that have a 'need to know' (e.g., principal, teachers, specialists, food service personnel, bus driver, coaches).
4. At the beginning of each school year, provide education and training of all school staff to review the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and epi-pen administration.
5. Conduct in-service and education for appropriate staff, including before and after school programs and field trip designees, regarding an individual student's life-threatening allergies, symptoms, risk reduction procedures and emergency procedures, as described in their IHCP and EAAP.
6. Maintain a list of students who require epi-pens for allergic reactions in the health office. IHCPs and EAAPs for those students will be available in their records.
7. Provide staff with a list of all students who have IHCP's.

Parties and Celebrations

1. School staff and/or school organizations may include food items at grade-level or school-wide events during the school day, provided all food is procured and supplied by the school's food service department, the event is monitored using the same guidelines as with snack and lunch, and the event is approved by the building principal.

2. Utilize alternate celebratory activities; i.e., crafts, videos, read-alouds, etc.